

show *how* impossible it would be, I wish I may be pardoned for making another strange and indeed a most monstrous supposition, namely, that Achilles, Diomed, Ulysses, and Ajax had been real persons, living in the time of our Lord, and had become his disciples, and yet, (excepting the mere exchange of the notions of mythology for Christian opinions,) had retained entire the state of mind with which their poet has exhibited them. It is instantly perceived that Satan, Beelzebub, and Moloch might as consistently have been* retained in heaven. But here the question comes to a point: if these great examples of glorious character pretending to coalesce with the transcendent Sovereign of virtues, would have been probably the most enormous incongruity existing, or that ever had existed, in the creation, what harmony can there be between a man who has acquired a considerable degree of congeniality with the spirit of these heroes, and that paramount Teacher and Pattern of excellence? And who will assure me that the enthusiast for heroic poetry does *not* acquire a degree of this congeniality? But unless I can be so assured, I necessarily persist in asserting the noxiousness of such poetry.

Yet, the work of Homer is, notwithstanding, the book which Christian poets have translated, which Christian divines have edited and commented on with pride, at which Christian ladies have been delighted to see their sons kindle into rapture, and which forms an essential part of the course of a liberal education, over all those countries on which the gospel shines. And who can tell how much that passion for war which, from the universality of its prevalence, might seem inseparable from the nature of man, may have been, in the civilized world, reinforced by the enthusiastic admiration with which young men have read Homer, and similar poets, whose genius transforms what is, and ought always to appear, purely horrid, to an aspect of grandeur? Should it be asked, What ought to be the practical consequence of such observations? I may surely answer that I cannot justly be required to assign that consequence. I cannot be required to do more than exhibit in a simple light an important point of truth. // such works do really impart their own spirit to the mind of an admiring reader, and if this spirit be totally hostile to that of Christianity, and if Christianity ought really and in good faith to be the supreme